

# SPRING 2014 Alumni Columns

Northwestern State University Magazine







*Dr. Randall J. Webb,  
1965, 1966  
President  
Northwestern State  
University*

Dear Alumni:

For several years now, Northwestern State University has placed an emphasis on service and made an effort to highlight the accomplishments of students and alumni whose endeavors benefit the greater good. In this issue of the Alumni Columns, you will read about several extraordinary individuals who have dedicated themselves to improving the lives of other people and the world around them. I hope their profiles will inspire you to give of yourself in your own community in your own way.

The university is moving forward to develop academic programs that will serve our region and state and help business and industry meet their needs.

We are excited about a new Doctor of Nursing Practice program that we plan to begin this fall. This program is a practice-focused doctoral degree for nurses seeking to further their career in advanced nursing practice. Northwestern State will have the only program of its type in north Louisiana and we anticipate strong demand for the degree.

Northwestern State Practitioner Teacher Program (PREP), an alternate certification pathway to teaching, will be available online beginning this summer. PREP is a summer intensive program available to individuals who have already completed an undergraduate degree who would like to become certified to teach.

Should you be seeking to further your education in one of these fields or know someone who would benefit from being part of these outstanding academic programs, I hope you will go to our website at [nsula.edu](http://nsula.edu) and get additional information.

Thank you for all you do to support Northwestern State University.



*Dr. Chris Maggio,  
1985, 1991  
Assistant Vice  
President of External  
Affairs for University  
Advancement*

My fellow alumni:

In the last few weeks, I have had the privilege of meeting many alumni and friends who attended our recruiting receptions and Alumni After Hours events in all corners of the state. More of these events are scheduled to take place through the rest of the spring season, so please check the back page of this magazine for a listing of After Hours events in your area.

As I write this, we are in final preparations for the President's Command Performance, a spring gala that will honor Bill Brent as the first inductee into the Creative and Performing Arts Hall of Fame. You can read about some of Bill's accomplishments in our Lagniappe section. You can also read about Dr. Stan Chadick's selection to receive a certificate of Meritorious Service from the Mathematical Association of America. These are just two examples of our outstanding faculty who impacted thousands of students during their careers at Northwestern.

I hope you will make plans to visit Natchitoches during our city's Tri-Centennial. Information about that is available on Page 16. We look forward to seeing you and, as always, thank you for your continued support of Northwestern State University.

Alumni Columns  
Official Publication of  
Northwestern State University  
Natchitoches, Louisiana  
Organized in 1884  
A member of CASE

Volume XXIV Number 1 Spring 2014  
The Alumni Columns (USPS 015480) is published  
by Northwestern State University,  
Natchitoches, Louisiana, 71497-0002  
Periodicals Postage Paid at Natchitoches, La.,  
and at additional mailing offices.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the  
Alumni Columns, Northwestern State University,  
Natchitoches, La. 71497-0002.  
Alumni Office Phone: 318-357-4414 and 888-799-6486  
FAX: 318-357-4225 • E-mail: [maggioc@nsula.edu](mailto:maggioc@nsula.edu)

#### NSU ALUMNI OFFICERS

President ..... Joseph B. Stamey, Natchitoches, 1983  
1st Vice President ..... Tommy Chester, Natchitoches, 1969  
2nd Vice President ..... Charles "Buddy" Wood, Many, 1981  
Secretary-Treasurer ..... Matt Bailey, Shreveport, 2003

#### EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Assistant Vice President of External Affairs for  
University Advancement ..... Chris Maggio, 1985, 1991  
Associate Director of  
Alumni Affairs ..... Haley Blount, 2006, 2007

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Will Adams ..... Shreveport, 2009  
Matt Bailey ..... Shreveport, 2003  
Dr. P. Cade Brumley ..... Stonewall, 2002  
Jerry Brungart ..... Natchitoches, 1969, 1971  
Monty Chicola ..... Alexandria, 1979, 1980  
Caron Chester Coleman ..... Natchitoches, 2000  
Leonard Endris ..... Shreveport, 1974, 1975  
Allen Evans ..... Shreveport, 1989  
John Evans ..... Natchitoches, 1992  
Michael Gallien ..... Houston, 1981  
Dr. Hayward Hargrove ..... Black Mountain, N.C., 1964  
Trey Hill ..... Carencro, 1985  
Patricia Hrapmann ..... New Orleans, 1973, 1978  
Carlos Jones ..... Round Rock, Texas, 1993  
Gail Jones ..... Natchez, 1981, 1998  
Matt Koury ..... Leesville, 1995  
Bryant Lewis ..... Haynesville, 1958  
Carroll Long ..... Longview, TX, 1967m 1970  
William L. Luckie ..... Lufkin, TX, 2008  
Dr. Lisa Landry Mathews ..... Shreveport, 1992  
David Morgan ..... Austin, TX, 1973  
Kip Patrick ..... Washington, DC, 1995  
Cliff Poimboeuf ..... Shreveport, 1984  
Joseph W. Schelette ..... Shreveport, 1969  
Glenn Talbert ..... Shreveport, 1964  
Carlos Treadway ..... Northville, MI, 1992  
Marti Vienne ..... Natchitoches, 1982  
Ricky Walmsley ..... Rogers, AR, 1985  
Mike Wilburn ..... Shreveport, 1975  
Dr. Leonard Williams ..... New Orleans, 1993

#### STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Kyla Winey ..... Lafayette, SGA President

Publisher ..... Chris Maggio, 1985, 1991  
Editor ..... Leah Pilcher Jackson, 1994, 2011  
Contributors ..... David West  
Doug Ireland, 1986  
Brittany Russ  
Photography ..... Gary Hardamon  
Design/Layout ..... Beth McPherson Mann, 1975

Northwestern State University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097; Telephone number 404-679-4501) to award Associate, Baccalaureate, Master's, and Specialist degrees.

This public document was published at a total cost of \$15,000. 47,000 copies of this public document were published in this first printing at a cost of \$15,000. The total cost of all printings of this document, including reprints is \$15,000. This document was published by Northwestern State University Office of University Advancement and printed by Moran Printing, Inc., 5425 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806 to foster and promote the mutually beneficial relationship between Northwestern State University and its alumni, supporters and community partners. This material was printed in accordance with standards for printing by state agencies established pursuant to R.S. 43.31. Printing of this material was purchased in accordance with the provisions of Title 43 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes.



## Northwesternalumni.com accessible through mobile devices

You can now access **northwesternalumni.com** more easily on your smartphone or tablet.

On your smartphone or table, open your Internet browser app (Safari, Google, etc.) and type in [northwesternalumni.com](http://northwesternalumni.com). If you use Safari, you will be directed directly to the site. If you use Google, you will need to click on the first link that pops up, which is the link to [northwesternalumni.com](http://northwesternalumni.com).

From here, you can access news, announcements, register for events, support the NSU Foundation, apply for scholarships and view the latest edition of Alumni Columns Magazine.

## Update your information at [northwesternalumni.com](http://northwesternalumni.com)

Northwestern State's Office of Alumni Affairs has created a Graduate Information Update form on their website. The form is accessible 24 hours a day seven days a week as a way for alumni to update their contact information without having to call the Alumni Affairs office or email the staff. The form also allows Alumni staff to collect more detailed information about alumni, such as student involvement, employment information and more.

Direct access to the form can be found at [www.northwesternalumni.com/gradinfo](http://www.northwesternalumni.com/gradinfo).

The Demon Regiment is currently updating its database. ROTC alumni who would like to update their contact information can do so by going online at <http://eepurl.com/FqYq5> or by emailing at [nsurotc@nsula.edu](mailto:nsurotc@nsula.edu).



## Christmas Festival raffle offers a chance to win a weekend in the City of Lights



Northwestern State University's Office of Alumni Affairs is hosting a raffle contest for alumni interested in attending the 2014 Natchitoches Christmas Festival.

The Christmas Festival raffle includes a \$50 gas card, two nights (Friday, Dec. 5-Saturday, Dec. 6) at a local hotel, admission or two to the NSU Foundation Christmas Gala reception and admission for two to the 9 p.m.

NSU Christmas Gala on Friday, Dec. 5. The package also includes admission for two to the 88<sup>th</sup> annual Natchitoches Christmas Festival and admission for two to the NSU Foundation/City of Natchitoches joint private reception at the Prudhomme-Roquier House from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 6.

"The Raffle ticket information is posted on our website and people can purchase tickets there as well," said Haley Blount, associate director of Alumni Affairs. "When someone purchases a ticket online, I will fill out a printed ticket just like anyone purchasing in person. We'll be selling these tickets at all of our alumni events in various cities throughout the spring."

Tickets are \$10. All proceeds will benefit the NSU Alumni Association.

For more information or to purchase a raffle ticket, contact Blount at (418) 357-4414 or e-mail [blounth@nsula.edu](mailto:blounth@nsula.edu). The direct link to purchase tickets via the Alumni Association website, visit [northwesternalumni.com/raffle14](http://northwesternalumni.com/raffle14).





*Shannon Strother is pictured wearing a bulletproof vest with members of a UNICEF security team while in the Central African Republic. Strother was there last year when Seleka rebels took Bangui, the capital, and violence erupted.*

## Courage, dedication motivate nurse to pursue relief work despite often dangerous conditions

**“Everything we do is important, one way or another. It might be changing a life one at a time or changing laws that will protect children moving forward.”**

So says Shannon Strother, currently working in the war-torn Republic of Mali, a poverty-stricken West African nation recovering from a 2012 military coup that left hundreds of thousands of displaced people facing a food crisis and ongoing concerns about security. Strother works with UNICEF, the United Nations Children’s Fund, currently leading a team of professionals in social policy.

“We work closely with the government, non-governmental organizations and communities affected by the drought, conflict and jihadists in Mali,” she said. “The most interesting thing is working to change laws, policy and

practices to allow children to be children and have their basic rights filled.”

The team recently helped the government pass a law to make the recruitment of children into armies illegal and is now working to change the legal age of marriage from 12 to 17. They are also working with the government to make sure children can attend school and get medical treatment for commonly fatal diseases.

“I travel to the field to work with the governors and their teams on making sure that they are providing basic services to children and that these children are receiving the best they can, but saying this, less than 50 percent of children have access to schools, 97 percent of girls and women have experienced female genital mutilation and there are an estimated 16,000 street children in Mali. We work to make sure that these children at least get a chance at a good, safe, productive life.

Its hard work to change the context and thinking of a country but it is terribly humbling and I learn every day.”

Strother’s career in international humanitarian work has taken her to some of the world’s most dangerous and unstable locales, places ravaged by political unrest or natural disasters. Prior to the post in Mali, she worked closely with displacement camps, hospitals, nutrition centers and with survivors of violence, but is now working at a higher level with government officials “to change the larger picture and to make sure children have what they need to survive. But for the first 10 years, I was in the trenches.”

Strother grew up in Shreveport and earned a nursing degree from Northwestern State in 1995.

“I never thought I would be a nurse, much less a pediatric nurse -- which I purposefully tried to avoid -- but I ended up doing an internship at LSU-

*continued on page 3*



*Shannon Strother continued from page 2*

Shreveport in the pediatric emergency room and outpatient clinic in my last semesters in nursing school in Shreveport," she said. "After graduation I moved in New Orleans and worked at Ochsner Hospital in the pediatric intensive care unit (PICU). After about 1-1/2 years in the PICU I decided I wanted to move overseas and change lives."

While working fulltime at the PICU, she completed coursework for a master's degree from the Tulane University School of Tropical Medicine and Public Health in 1998, then volunteered with the Peace Corps.

"When I got back from the Peace Corps I had decided working overseas was for me and I was particularly interested in emergency health and nutrition," she said. "I had my eye on Sudan, where there was a severe nutrition crisis and children were dying. I applied and was hired by Action Contre la Faim (ACF) or Action Against Hunger which is a French international non-government organization who is the world leader in emergency or humanitarian nutritional programs. Specifically, they work in saving lives of children who are literally dying from being malnourished in developing and humanitarian contexts – including those countries that are impacted by natural disasters like Haiti or the Philippines or conflict zones like Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syria or Mali.

"With ACF I ended up being sent to work in Eastern Democratic Republic (DR) of Congo, where they were in the middle of a new rebellion and actually lived in Bujumbura Burundi, which is just across Lake Tanganyika from Eastern Congo. I continued to work with ACF until 2001 in eastern DR Congo, Angola, western DR Congo. When I was sent to work in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1998, I did not speak French and ended up using a type of charades to learn French and Swahili so that I could communicate with my Congolese team, community leaders, mothers of malnourished children and the children themselves – needless to say, it was an interesting and frustrating time."

In 2001, Strother was recruited by UNICEF in Kinshasa where she had just assisted the government of DR Congo in writing a national nutritional pro-



*Strother is pictured with the Minister of Territorial Administration and his staff with her team of social policy professionals in Mali.*

tol for the identification, reference, treatment and follow-up of children suffering from acute malnutrition.

"These are the kids you see on TV that are starving to death. This protocol was important because, prior to this, in DR Congo, kids that were dying from malnutrition were considered to be pregnant, cursed, sorcerers, etc., so it was a real success to have the government to recognize this was needed and have it done to save lives."

Strother stayed with UNICEF from 2001-08, working in conflict countries like Haiti's 2004 coup d'état and in Ivory Coast, Liberia, DR Congo and Uganda. She provided support to the tsunami ground zero in Indonesia, worked in Madagascar following Cyclone Ivan, the Liberia crisis and most recently was in Bangui, Central African Republic during the 2013 coup d'état, managing the emergency program for UNICEF as the Seleka rebels took the country and it fell into chaos.

She left UNICEF from 2008-2011 and worked at an emergency and homeland security research institute at University of Louisiana-Lafayette and later with Tulane University's resilience masters program and research institute.

"Now I'm back to UNICEF. I have literally run from lava in Congo, hidden under my bed in Angola as rebels were attacking our village, and been 'held' by rebels for two days – its been a trip."

To cope with those hardships, Strother recharges by listening to music, reading, swimming and meditating.

"You can imagine that working in these types of environments can be very stressful – from seeing extraordinary suffering and poverty every day, everywhere, to managing security incidents such as jihadist blowing up UN staff to hundreds of thousands of people being displaced by armed fighting. When I was in the tsunami, after 2 months of being there, they were still finding approximately 800 bodies per day and that is only one example of the kinds of things I have seen. You have to find how you can manage with all sorts of stuff."

She is constantly humbled by what she sees.

"The coping mechanisms that mothers use to keep their children safe and alive like selling mangos or bananas to making their food stretch beyond what we would think is normal. In Mali, over 1.4 million children under five years old live in households that earn less than \$1.25 a day – can you imagine? For a family, that is maximum \$37.50 a month. I don't know how they do it. They are amazing and we are working to help lessen the load a bit."

Strother said her family, particularly her mother, has always supported her, encouraging her to seek ways to make the world a better place.

"I learn everyday something new. I am consistently challenged and humbled and I consider it an honor to be able to serve people in all sorts of contexts. I have been lucky to fall into a career that makes me feel professionally and spiritually full."



# CAP volunteer Stephanie Guffey Nelsen knows what art means to child cancer patients – she was one herself



*Stephanie Guffey Nelsen poses in front of the Children's Art Project float in Houston's Thanksgiving Day Parade.*

Stephanie Guffey Nelsen is devoted to making life better for children with cancer and has for the last nine years volunteered with the MD Anderson Cancer Center Children's Art Project. The Children's Art Project (CAP), formerly the Children's Christmas Card Project, began in 1973 and provides cheer and comfort to children battling cancer while funding patient-focused programs at MD Anderson.

**"We just celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of helping 'make life better for children with cancer,' which is our motto," Nelsen said.**

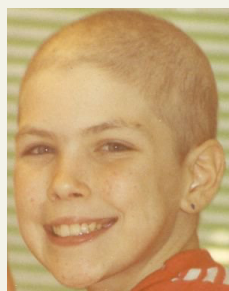
Through CAP, the artwork and drawings of child cancer patients is featured on note cards, gift items and other merchandise that returns more than \$30 million to programs that benefit pediatric cancer patients and their families. But the program's highest priority is ensuring that young patients have opportunities to live a more normal childhood. Nelsen plays a behind-the-scenes role that began with packaging online orders for shipping and preparing merchandise for sale.

"Now I work fulltime so I can't devote as much of my time as I would like to them, but I volunteer at the CAP Boutique at Uptown Park in Houston during the holiday season and am part of the Adopt-A-Display program," she said, explaining that CAP places merchandise in displays all over the country and relies on volunteers to oversee and replenish.

"Since CAP is a non-profit we depend heavily on volunteers, so I feel like anything I can contribute is better than nothing," she said.

The work is especially meaningful for Nelsen, herself a former cancer patient, diagnosed in May 1982 at age 11 with osteosarcoma, a type of bone cancer, in her left tibia.

"I went through 18 months of chemotherapy, which was scary and no fun at all. By September 1982, just four months later, I had lost 70 percent of my hearing due to nerve damage from the chemo. At the time it proved to be a real challenge because technology back then didn't help much. Not so now. Digital hearing aids and other equipment have given me my life back."



*Stephanie at age 11 during cancer treatment*

While many osteo patients have amputations or limb salvage surgery in which the bone is removed, Nelsen had neither. After finishing chemotherapy, she underwent an allograft procedure in 1985 in which a portion of her tibia was removed and a donor bone implanted. The bones were slow to attach, so during two more operations, bone chips from her hips were packed between the donor bone and the natural bone to tighten the gap and force them to grow together. The third surgery was a success and recovery followed quickly.

"During my time at MD Anderson I got to make designs for the Christmas cards for what was then still The Children's Christmas Card Project. My designs were never chosen for the cards that were sold, but it was fun to make them. Just for a little while we had markers and crayons and a great creative distraction from being a cancer patient," she said. "For Christmas 1982 CAP asked me to be the representative child in The Children's Christmas Card Project TV commercial and of course I was happy to do it. CAP has meant the world to me ever since then, and I always knew I'd eventually go back and volunteer for them."

Nelsen's family is from Leesville and her late grandfather, Charles Guffey Sr., drove the NSU commuter bus between Leesville and Natchitoches in the 1970s and 1980s. Her father, Charles Guffey Jr., graduated from Northwestern in

1974 with a degree in geography and anthropology. As a child, she divided her time between Houston and Leesville until her stepfather took a job in Nicosia, Cyprus, where she finished high school at the American International School before enrolling at Northwestern State. She earned a bachelor's of social work degree in 1993 and continued on in pursuit of a master's degree through a CAP Graduate Scholarship.

"I am forever grateful that they awarded it to me. I graduated May 8, 1998, with a Master of Arts in Student Personnel Services. During graduate school I was a graduate assistant and intern to Dr. Sue Weaver at the General College. I was in charge of Disability Services, and that is why I got the SPS degree at first. I loved doing that."

After grad school, she moved back to Houston and, despite the challenges presented by her hearing loss, eventually began working as an academic advisor at the University of Houston. She married her husband Matt in 2011 and the two enjoy Li, their Shih Tzu, whose adoption was arranged through a friend and fellow survivor Nelsen met as a child at MD Anderson.

Although she is not directly involved in working with the pediatric cancer patients, Nelsen said no task is too small and she finds it rewarding to meet other volunteers who share her passion, as well as the CAP staff. She was also able to meet some of 2013's star designers at Houston's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

"CAP made a float and the kids rode on convertibles and waved to the crowd. They also got to be on TV as the news crews talked to them on camera. I know that was cool for them. My husband and I marched in front of the float and carried the banner for them. We are very much a family at CAP, the staff, volunteers, kids and their families. It really makes things awesome."

"CAP is rewarding to me because I know every single thing I do no matter how large or small is going to benefit those kids at MD Anderson," Nelsen said. "I was once one of those kids, and once you have been there you know what they are going through. If I can help make their lives just a little bit brighter while they are going through all that, and after then that is my reward."

For information on CAP, visit [childrensart.org](http://childrensart.org).





### Former Demon Rob Robertson, living and giving

**R**ob Robertson (2000) gives back to his community by mentoring youth and supporting non-profits through a matching program with his employer, Wells Fargo. Roberts is a branch manager for Wells Fargo Home Mortgage in Atlanta, Ga., a member of the Leader's Club, which recognizes the company's top loan officers nationwide, and an ambassador in his area for Wells Fargo's Live and Give Campaign.

Through the Live and Give Campaign, Robertson made contributions to his children's school.

"It's a program that Wells Fargo does annually to give back to the community," he said. "It allows them to use the gifts to expand or add something to the facilities. In my case, it helps the school with academics and things for the kids to grow and equip themselves with new technology."

In addition to giving to the school, he also donated tickets to a Baltimore Ravens/Pittsburgh Steelers game.

Robertson played with the NSU Demon football team and was drafted by the Baltimore Ravens to play full back for two seasons in 1998-2000 and was roommates with former NFL Offensive MVP Priest Holmes.

"We did a lot in the community with the kids and giving back during speaking events, etc.," he said. He is an active member of the NFL Retired Players alumni and maintains a good relationship with Ravens executives. "I go back to a game once per year to see the team. I do an annual father/son trip to Baltimore to take my son with me."

After football, Robertson returned to Northwestern State to finish his degree in business administration in 2000.

Today, he is an ordained deacon in his church and a volunteer coach, leading a little league Pop Warner team of 27 9-year-olds last fall.

"Time is the main challenge," he said. "But the rewards are when you see the light bulb go off and a kid is excited about making a difference on the team. I think my main impact to the kids is being a role model and leading with character and integrity. Giving back to those kids is fulfilling and to see them unite as one team working hard as young men was very uplifting."

Robertson and his wife Nneka have been married 11 years and have two children, Bryson O'Connor and Boston Olivia.

"We love life, we love to travel and to have quality family time."

## On the Bookshelf

### Lakeisha Gray published her first children's book, "Cankeyo."

"This book is about three young girl friends that aspired to dream big and achieve their dreams," Gray said. "Even in the midst of tests and trials such as being raised in single-parent homes, family issues or school-related issues, they still desire to dream. Becoming a nurse, lawyer and teacher was a real dream for these girls and they felt as if when their dreams were fulfilled they could impact, affect and help their community more."

More information about the book is available at [cankeyo.com](http://cankeyo.com), where autographed copies are available for purchase. Users can also leave comments, suggestions and feedback on the site.

"This book has a great reading message and will encourage readers to have dreams, to dream big and not let anything or anyone stop them from dreaming," Gray said.

Gray graduated from Northwestern State's criminal justice program in 2007 and received the Outstanding Alumnus Award from the criminal justice program in 2012. She graduated from Southern University Law Center in 2011 and practices law in Monroe, representing children who have been neglected or abused.

### Fletcher McHale has released her debut novel, "Save Us A Seat."

McHale studied history at Northwestern State and currently lives on her century-old family farm in central Louisiana. She enjoys family, writing, football, baseball and raising a variety of animals.

"Save Us A Seat" tells the story of Carrigan Whitfield whose days revolve around having fun with her two best friends until a shocking and unexpected discovery turns her perfect life into a tumultuous storm. "Save Us A Seat" is the story of a brutally honest, no-holds-barred, fiercely loyal friendship between three women. Readers will experience a roller coaster of emotions as the friends navigate the sometimes hilarious, often touching and always loyal road of friendship and the joys and trials it brings.

The book is available on Amazon.com. More information on McHale is available at [fletcher-mchale.wordpress.com](http://fletcher-mchale.wordpress.com).



# Wayne Williamson's line of work is finding work for others

Wayne Williamson has a talent for finding the right people for the right job and giving them wings. With more than 40 years of experience in the personnel industry and an entrepreneur with a hand in other ventures, Williamson's energy and work ethic have seen him through the highs and lows of a long career in the business of putting people to work.

"Every day is a challenge," said Williamson, who on a recent busy morning was wearing many hats at the office of Diversity One Staffing in Monroe, a business he runs with his wife Kathy.

**"My talent is taking people who never thought they could become anything and seeing them grow their business. There are many cases of me helping others become successful business people. Exceptional people do exceptional things when you give them a chance," he said.**

Williamson, who earned his accounting degree at Northwestern State in 1961, is currently writing a book about his personal history, his boyhood in Montgomery, his love of baseball, his years at Northwestern State and "things that would be of interest to my grandkids."

At NSU, he was freshman class president, business manager of The Current Sauce and active in Blue Key when the chapter was brand new. He also participated in ROTC and served in the Army for two years after graduation. His roommate and close friend was William "Billy" Muse, "a high achiever who helped me get involved," he remembered.

But before that, Williamson attempted a career in baseball.

"At that time, [NSU baseball] Coach Cracker Brown did not play freshmen," he said. "I had been scouted by several major league clubs." After the spring season, he tried out for the Shreveport Sports as a catcher in 1958. He was later sold to the Kansas City Athletics, then sent to Class D Farm in Plainview, Texas, until being cut that June.

"So, I decided to get my education. I went back to Montgomery and went back to school and loved every minute of it," said adding that, with only about 3,000 students "everybody knew everybody." Williamson later earned an MBA from Pepperdine University. His roommate, Muse, went on to a distinguished career in higher education, serving as president of the University of Akron and Auburn University and chancellor of East Carolina University, among other high administrative positions at universities around the country.

"He put me in his book, so I'm returning the favor," Williamson said.

Williamson began his college career as a chemistry major and admits he almost flunked out, but found his niche in accounting. Upon graduation, he went to work for a New Orleans CPA firm, then was called to serve in the Army, stationed for two years at a missile site that protected Barksdale Air Force Base. Williamson worked part time at a hospital in Shreveport and connected with the owner, who also owned a life insurance agency, which Williamson saw as an opportunity. He obtained a license and sold life insurance, later going to work for All State, where he excelled in sales management.

In the late 1960s, Williamson visited a friend in Metairie who had just purchased a Snelling and Snelling staffing franchise.



Williamson

"I'd never heard of an employment agency," he said, but realized there could be a market an opportunity for such a business in north Louisiana." He quickly gathered the funds to apply for a franchise and, through hard work, opened his first office in 1968.

"With people who joined me, over the next few years, we opened 38 offices across 12 southern states," he said.

Not all his endeavors were successful. A venture in a computer business in the late 1970s left him in debt and he sold all but two of his employment offices to partners. After working as a senior vice president for Snelling in the 1980s, he was terminated. He had been running 450 Snelling offices and got 10 free franchises as severance.

By 1990, he began opening offices without partners, which grew to 38 offices in 20 states. He went independent in 1999 and sold to a Japanese company in 2003. He continued to run the company, which eventually sold again, at which point he was laid off. For about two years, he was primarily engaged in running a property location, lease and development business, before joining Vistage International as chair of a peer advisory group. In that capacity, he serves as a coach and mentor for CEOs and business owners seeking to improve their business performance. Last year, he and his wife Kathy opened Diversity One Staffing, where he serves as vice president.

"I don't do small," he said. The company has two offices and 17 employees in Monroe and Lafayette that engage in executive search, local hire and temporary placement.

Williamson has been recognized by the Northeast Louisiana Business Association, Monroe's Downtown Development Commission and other civic groups for leading the charge to revitalize downtown Monroe. He and Kathy are active in First Baptist Church-West Monroe and together have four children. Both of Williamson's adult children are entrepreneurs who got their start without his help.

*continued on page 7*



# Spotlights

## Jennifer Gray

(2002) joined CNN as an Atlanta-based meteorologist late last year. Gray, who is a member of the National Weather Association and has earned the AMS Seal of Approval from the American Meteorology Society, will be based in Atlanta at the network's global headquarters.

Prior to joining CNN, Gray was the weekend morning show meteorologist and a feature reporter for WTVJ, the NBC affiliate in Miami, where she covered severe weather in the field and helped produce specials that focused on hurricane preparedness and safety. She co-hosted and co-produced



'Florida Insider Fishing Report' for Sun Sports and 'Beyond The Reef' in conjunction with the Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation, raising awareness of conservation issues facing the oceans and Florida's fisheries.

**Dr. John Ramsey** (1968, 1971) announced plans to retire from Tesoro Retail Marketing where he most recently was vice president. Tesoro is one of the largest independent refiners and marketers of petroleum products in the U.S. Dr. Ramsey worked for Tesoro for 14 years and a total of 34 years in the industry. He joined Tesoro in 2000 after distinguished careers in academia and at Texaco and led Tesoro's retail marketing efforts in improving

safety performance, profitability and operational efficiency through better tools and processes. Dr. Ramsey and his wife Patricia live in Helotes, Texas, near San Antonio.

**Gloria Jean Jackson Jennings**, who earned an associate degree in Child Development in 1998, completed a general studies degree with add-on in elementary education at NSU in 2000. In 2013, she completed a graduate degree at Grand Canyon University in K-6 education and is a teacher with the Cumberland County School System. She lives in Fayetteville, N.C. with her husband Bruce Edward Billings Jr.

*Wayne Williamson continued from page 6*

Williamson likes to work. "I can't stay home and putter. I try to enjoy what's left of life." Last year, Kathy gave him a week with the New York Yankees at the Yankee's Fantasy Camp, where he played with several ex-Yankees as he played catcher in eight games over four days.

### Advice he would give to aspiring business students:

- "Be prepared for the ups and downs and understand you're only as good as you perform. Your selection of business should be informed, but most entrepreneurs are opportunists."
- "If you think you want to be in business, get your degree in accounting. I had the rare combination of an accounting degree and a mentor in sales management so I learned to understand and can teach sales management."
- "I've had several businesses that didn't make it, some lost overnight. Some looked good on the surface but didn't work. The things you can't see down the road are the ones that bite you. But remember the words of Winston Churchill, 'Never, never, never give up.'"

He grades his education at Northwestern State as first rate, offering practical experiences – keeping the books for The Current Sauce, working with the paper's advertising and layout and penning sports articles – which gave him valuable experience with sales, writing and management.

"I consider myself blessed. I've had ups and downs, I've survived, prospered and always bounce back. You will have defeats but you have to move forward," he said. "I'm happy with my life."



Northwestern State University will become a tobacco free campus effective August 1. The new policy will prohibit tobacco use on all Northwestern State campuses.

According to Vice President for University Affairs Marcus Jones, the policy will cover all interior spaces on Northwestern State's Natchitoches campus and branch campuses, properties leased or operated by the university, all campus housing, indoor and outdoor athletic facilities, vehicles owned or leased by the university and personal vehicles on the Northwestern State campus whether they are moving or parked. The policy will apply to Northwestern State faculty, staff, students and visitors to campus including contracted personnel, contractors and vendors. The policy applies to all university events and events held in university facilities.

Northwestern State has had a smoke-free campus policy, which prohibits smoking within 25 feet of campus buildings and at outdoor athletic facilities.

"This policy is designed to create a healthier environment for students, faculty, staff and visitors on Northwestern State's campus by minimizing tobacco use," said Jones. "We hope to prevent or reduce exposure of individuals to secondhand smoke and help reduce tobacco use among NSU students, faculty, staff and campus visitors." Under Act 211 of the 2013 session of the Louisiana Legislature, all public post-secondary institutions in Louisiana are required to be smoke free. Each institution has the option to become tobacco free. The policy covers all tobacco derived or containing products, including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars and cigarillos, pipes, hookah-smoked products, oral tobacco and e-cigarettes.

Those who violate the policy are subject to a fine.

The policy will be communicated through orientation sessions for new students, safety meetings, internal communications and mail outs to alumni and athletic ticketholders.



## Writing angles career of a lifetime for Bassmaster editor

**Dave Precht** (1973) would be the first to say he is the luckiest guy in the world, having enjoyed a long, productive career as a writer and editor for Bassmaster Magazine and other publications produced by B.A.S.S., the professional bass fishing organization for which Precht serves as editorial and communications vice president. Precht, who lives in Birmingham, Ala., where B.A.S.S. is headquartered, is a member of the B.A.S.S. Fishing Hall of Fame and recipient of numerous professional honors. His career has allowed him to travel extensively, meet and write about celebrity anglers, promote conservation and document professional fishing's growth in popularity.

Bassmaster Magazine is the largest fishing magazine in the world with both print and digital editions. Precht directs a large stable of freelance writers -- most of whom are serious fishermen -- and knowledgeable editors to cover bass tournaments and professional anglers in what has grown into a multi-billion dollar industry. He also edits Bass Times, a tabloid for a subset of Bassmaster readers, and oversees the organization's print media and public relations.

Precht's aspirations to write about the outdoors began during his youth in Jennings.

"I knew from early childhood growing up on a farm, I loved the outdoors and always wanted to be editor of a hunting or fishing magazine," he said.

He got a job as a printer's devil and "gopher" at the Jennings Daily News as an 11th grader. Having some experience with photography through work at a photo studio, he began covering high school football games. One night, the sideline reporter handed Precht his notebook and left. Precht wrote the story and from then on was the paper's sports writer. During his junior and senior years at Jennings High School, he worked at the paper before school laying out pages and after school covering ball games. An English teacher who attended

Northwestern State encouraged him to enroll at NSU, where he majored in journalism and was editor of The Current Sauce from 1968-1969. He resigned The Current Sauce during his second term as editor to run for president of the Student Government Association. He was also a member of Kappa Sigma Fraternity.

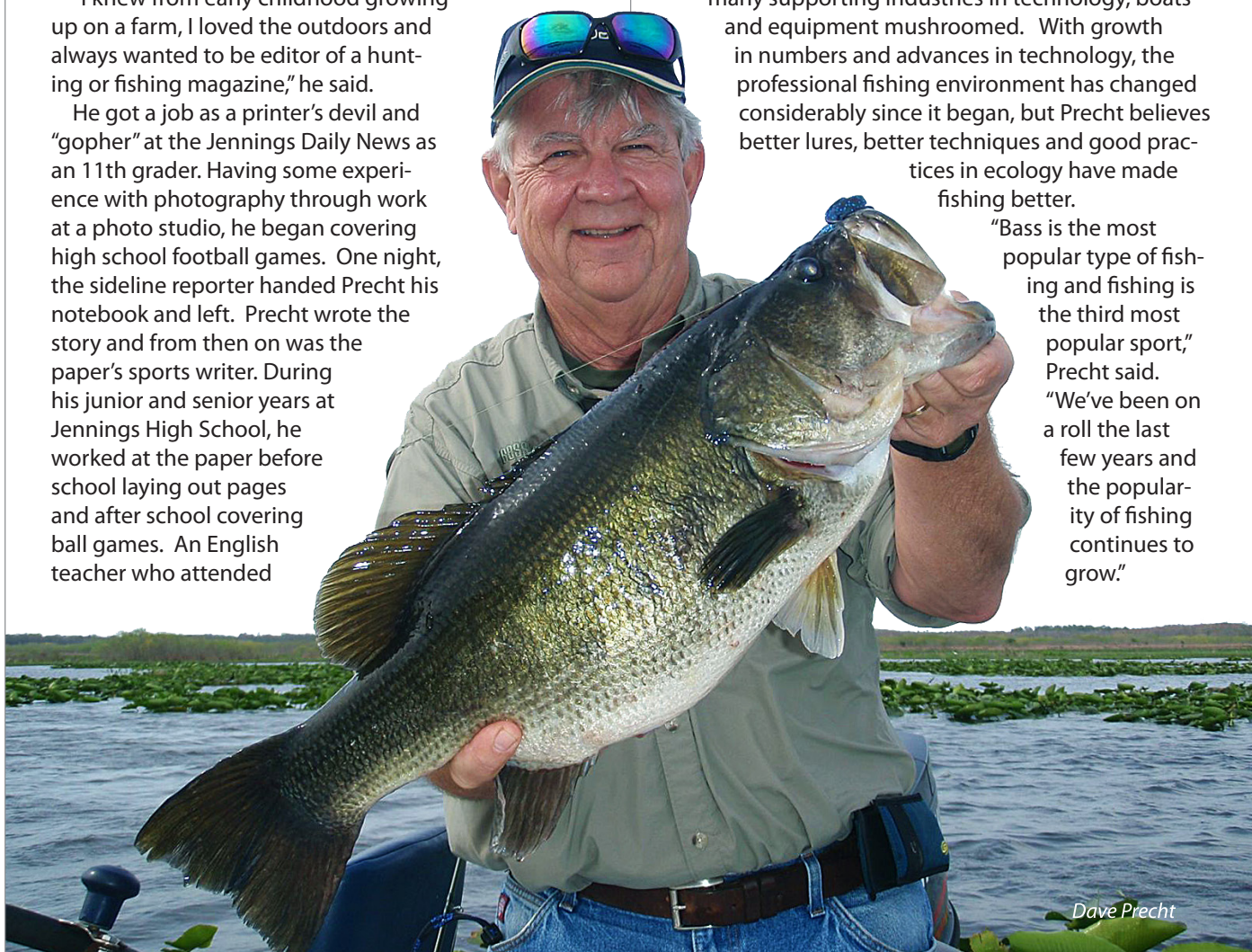
"I learned more on the job and as editor of The Current Sauce and working with the Jennings paper and the Natchitoches Times," he said. "The hands-on experience taught me more than my journalism classes."

After graduating from Northwestern, he covered hard news with the Lafayette Advertiser and the Houston Post and became the Post's outdoor editor. He joined B.A.S.S. in 1979. He ran the B.A.S.S. Communications office from 1979-90, edited Southern Outdoors from 1984-2003 and remains editor in chief of Bassmaster. First published in 1968 as the newsletter for the newly formed Bass Anglers Sportsman Society, Bassmaster is today regarded as the bible of today's bass fisherman.

"It's been fun," he said. "I always had people to help me out and point me in the right direction."

Professional fishing began in the summer of 1967 with the first big tournament in Arkansas funded by B.A.S.S. From those first tournaments the sport and many supporting industries in technology, boats and equipment mushroomed. With growth in numbers and advances in technology, the professional fishing environment has changed considerably since it began, but Precht believes better lures, better techniques and good practices in ecology have made fishing better.

"Bass is the most popular type of fishing and fishing is the third most popular sport," Precht said. "We've been on a roll the last few years and the popularity of fishing continues to grow."



Dave Precht

*continued on page 9*



Bassmaster is conservation-oriented, advocating for clean water, good fisheries management and issues vital to the future of the sport. Precht said a highlight of his career was participating in President George H.W. Bush's Outdoor Media Roundtable in 1989-90. B.A.S.S. promotes catch-and-release practices, emphasizes stewardship and encourages youngsters to get engaged in the outdoors.

The popularity of the Bassmaster tournaments continues to grow. Precht said Shreveport-Bossier's 2012 Bassmaster Classic on the Red River was one of the event's best venues, attracting more than 136,000 people who attended events surrounding the tournament. Precht often travels to the upper level events and recently returned from a trip to the Amazon Basin, where he fished a tributary of the Rio Negro.

After years of fishing, writing about fishing and talking with professionals about fishing, Precht continues to learn new things.

"The Bassmaster Elite Series tournament circuit is the proving ground for new techniques and technology related to bass fishing, and it's my job to stay ahead of the curve," he said "Our readers expect B.A.S.S. publications to tell them about the newest and hottest lures, tackle and tactics before any other media source. I consider it my job to field test these new products and techniques, which takes me out of the office and onto the water quite often. Which is why I love this job."



*This photo of Dave Precht by current Bassmaster editor James Hall ended up on the cover of Bassmaster Magazine. The fish weighed nine pounds.*

## RECIPE

From the kitchen of:

### Folklife Center seeking traditional recipes for Folk Festival cookbook

**The Louisiana Folklife Center is seeking help as it updates the Natchitoches-Northwestern State University Folk Festival Cookbook and invites the public to submit recipes for consideration. Personal stories about the recipe are also welcome.**

"Have your recipe go down in culinary history by contributing your traditional recipes to be included in the Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival Cookbook," said Dr. Shane Rasmussen, director of the Louisiana Folklife Center.

Sales of the cookbook will be used to support the annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival, a non-profit event.

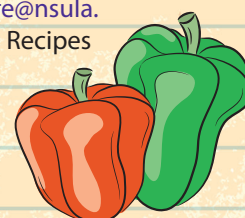
"The Louisiana Folklife Center is unable to provide remuneration for recipes contributed for the cookbook, but all contributors will be gratefully acknowledged in the book," Rasmussen said. "Please contribute by sending your traditional family recipes. The selected recipes will be added to the cookbook to be sold at this year's festival."

This 35th annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival will be held July 18-19 in Prather Coliseum on NSU's campus. This year's theme is "Tricentennial Natchitoches: Celebrating Louisiana's Folk Heritage." The event will include the Louisiana State Fiddle Championship on Saturday, July 19, as well as music, dancing, craft demonstrations, cuisine,

narrative sessions and KidFest. Al Ferrier and Jo-El Sonnier will headline a two-day line-up of entertainment that includes a variety of styles of music ranging from country, honky tonk, Cajun, zydeco, gospel, bluegrass, and blues. Dozens of craftspeople will display and demonstrate their traditional work and discuss techniques with those attending the Festival. Crafts include beadwork, baskets, instruments, Pysanky eggs, bull whips, iron work, quilts and bonnet, whittling and needlework, wood carving, toys, dolls, paintings, sculpture, walking sticks and more.

"Cooking and passing down recipes through generations is an intrinsic part of Louisiana culture," Rasmussen said. "We hope to include many traditional and beloved recipes that illustrate the richness and diversity of our state."

Recipes can be e-mailed to [folklife@nsula.edu](mailto:folklife@nsula.edu) with Cookbook as the subject. Recipes can also be mailed to the Louisiana Folklife Center, NSU Box 3663, Natchitoches, LA 71497. For information on the 2014 Folk Festival, visit [louisianafolklife.nsula.edu](http://louisianafolklife.nsula.edu).







Dr. Hayward Hargrove



Carroll Long



Sen. Gerald Long



Denise Lewis Patrick



Greg Vesey

## *Distinguished alumni inducted into Long Purple Line*

**N**orthwestern State University will honor five graduates by inducting them into the University's alumni hall of distinction, the Long Purple Line. The 2014 inductees are Dr. Hayward W. "Sonny" Hargrove of Black Mountain, N.C.; Carroll Long and Sen. Gerald Long, both of Natchitoches; Denise Lewis Patrick of Montclair, N.J., and Greg Vesey of Houston.

Honorees will be honored with a luncheon at 11:30 a.m. Friday, April 4 in the Sylvan Friedman Student Union. Tickets are \$20 each and can be purchased online at [northwesternalumni.com/lpl14](http://northwesternalumni.com/lpl14) or by calling (318) 357-4414. Dress is Business Casual.



**Hargrove** graduated from Northwestern State in 1964 with a degree in education. He earned a master's degree at Louisiana State University and a doctorate at the University of Mississippi. Hargrove was a college and university administrator for 25 years and taught undergraduate and graduate classes in education and university administration. He was active in many professional organizations and served as a consultant at many national and international conferences, developed an international studies program and was involved in student personnel services, public relations and fund raising during years at Baylor University, Linfield

College, the University of Mississippi and Montreat College.

Hargrove has been an ordained minister since 1986. He is a volunteer chaplain with the Mountain Area Hospice in Asheville, N.C. and the Buncombe County Sheriff's Department and has worked with chaplain volunteers in hospitals, nursing homes and the Mountain Area Hospice. He also worked with inmates in a Recovery Venture program to help them transition back into private life and led mission trips to China, Japan, Switzerland and Korea.

Active in student government as an undergraduate, Hargrove's continued relationship with Northwestern State has included service with Alumni Association board of directors. He has also been involved with Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Rotary Club of Black Mountain, the American Cancer Society, Habitat for Humanity and many other professional and service organizations.



**Carroll Long** earned a bachelor's degree in education at NSU in 1967 and a master's degree in 1970. He and his twin brother Gerald were the youngest of his parents' eight children, all boys, who grew up in Winnfield, hunting, fishing and playing ball. Long and his twin attended Northwestern State on football scholarships and Long was elected president of the freshman class. As an athlete, he was presented the

Coaches Award for demonstrating leadership, character and an example to his teammates and was one of three permanent captains for the undefeated 1966 football team. After graduation, he returned to Winnfield where he taught American history and coached football and basketball and was the first high school coach in north Louisiana to play African American athletes at a public school.

Long later embarked on a long, successful career with State Farm, earning a lifetime membership in the President's club, the highest honor for an agent.

For the last 40 years, Long has been a devoted supporter of Northwestern State. He and his wife have hosted more than 100 events for NSU athletes and prospective students and he served on the board of the Alumni Association for many years, as well as a volunteer chaplain for the football team.



**Sen. Gerald Long** is the elected state senator for District 31 that includes Natchitoches, Winn, Grant, Sabine and parts of Red River and Rapides parishes. In that capacity, he is chairman of the natural resources committee and serves on committees that oversee agriculture, forestry, aquaculture, rural development, finance insurance and retirement. He is also a member of the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget, the Louisiana Abraham

*continued on page 11*

## Northwestern State seeking nominations for Hall of Distinguished Educators

Northwestern State University's Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development Alumni Advisory Board is seeking nominations for the Hall of Distinguished Educators for 2014. Nominees must have graduated from Northwestern State's College of Education at least 30 years prior to nomination. Inductees will be honored during a brunch and induction ceremony at the Teacher Education Center during Homecoming festivities. The deadline to submit nominations is July 20.

Anyone who would like to nominate an outstanding College of Education alumnus who has had a distinguished career in education should send the nominee's resume and other documentation outlining the reason for the nomination to NSU Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development, c/o Janet Broadway, Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, LA 71497.

Additional information is available by calling Broadway at (318) 357-6278 or emailing [broadwayj@nsula.edu](mailto:broadwayj@nsula.edu).

*Long Purple Line continued from page 10*

Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, the Legislative Advisory Board for the Southern Regional Education Board and the Legislative Rural Caucus.

Sen. Long graduated from Northwestern State in 1966 with a bachelor's degree in education and a minor in English. He taught at the junior high and high school level before beginning a career in insurance and retired from State Farm in 1999. Along with his wife, he has served as a representative for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes in 10 parishes, comprised of 80 junior high and high schools and two universities.

Sen. Long has been active in his community as a past president of the Natchitoches Kiwanis Club, a member of the Natchitoches Area Chamber of Commerce and the Northwestern State Athletic Board of Directors, a deacon at First Baptist Church and was named Business and Professional Women's 2005 Man of the Year. He was elected Legislator of the Year by Rural Hospital Association in 2008, and awarded the Tourism Louey Award in 2012.



**Patrick** is a freelance writer, editor, instructor and literary consultant who has authored books of poetry, short stories, picture and board books for children, non-fiction biographies, middle grade novels and a young adult novel. Her historical fiction series focusing on the American Girl character Cecile Rey exposed the

Creole culture of Louisiana to a broad audience through the popular doll and accompanying books.

A Natchitoches native, Patrick earned a degree in journalism at Northwestern State in 1977 and is pursuing a master's in creative writing from the University of New Orleans. She has written narratives for the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center exhibition, published a review in the New York Times and has written sections for Fodor's Travel Guides to New York City. She has also worked as an editor for Scholastic, Inc., as well as several other publishing companies and teaches intermediate writing at Nyack College.

Patrick was lauded by the African American Academy of Arts and Letters for Children's Book of the Year, was a runner-up for the Lamplighter Award by the National Christian School Association and has had two books listed as Best Books for the Teenager by the New York Public Library. She has served on the advisory board for the Books for Kids Foundation, as a mentor for an afterschool writing club, as a writer's coach and as an elementary school reading volunteer.



**Vesey** has since 2011 served as vice president of Chevron Gas Supply and Trading with responsibility for marketing natural gas to customers throughout North America and con-

tributing to the growth of Chevron's European gas business. His group is also responsible for Chevron's Global LNG trading activity, as well as Global NGL trading activity.

In 2006 Vesey was named president of Chevron Global Power Company, which manages Chevron's portfolio of commercial power plants and projects in the U.S., Asia, Middle East and Europe and identifies new growth opportunities for power worldwide. Prior to that assignment, he served as president of Chevron Technology Ventures for five years, responsible for creating a portfolio of new opportunities in Chevron's business activities in hydrogen, emerging energy and nanotechnology and Chevron's venture capital investing.

Vesey serves as Chevron's board-level representative to the Natural Gas Supply Association, where he is currently chairman. In addition, he is a past chairman and member of the board of directors for Junior Achievement of Southeast Texas and is a board member and vice president of Development for the Alley Theatre.

A native of Amityville, N.Y., Vesey graduated from Northwestern State in 1980 with a bachelor's degree in business and began his career in the energy industry in December of that year.

If you would like to nominate someone for the Long Purple Line, visit [northwesternalumni.com/long-purpleline](http://northwesternalumni.com/long-purpleline).





## Doctor of Nursing Practice enrolling for fall semester

A Doctor of Nursing Practice degree at Northwestern State University has been approved by the Board of Regents. Northwestern State officials plan to begin the program next fall pending approval by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree is a practice-focused doctoral degree for nurses seeking to further their career in advanced nursing practice. Courses will be delivered primarily via the Internet and compressed video.

"The approval of the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree is a major step forward for the College of Nursing and School of Allied Health and Northwestern State," said NSU President Dr. Randall J. Webb. "Our nursing program has received national recognition for its quality and the DNP will be a major asset as we continue to grow to meet the healthcare needs of our region and the state."

Northwestern State's program would be the only one of its type available in north Louisiana. University officials said there is high demand for the program and that many prospective students in north Louisiana have been pursuing the DNP degree at out-of-state institutions. Northwestern State has four nurse practitioner concentrations in its Master of Science in Nursing program and is the largest single university producer of nurse practitioners in Louisiana.

The program will begin in two phases. Phase one entry is for individuals with a master's degree or research doctorate degree who hold advanced practice nursing certification. Phase two entry is for baccalaureate-prepared nurses.

Development of the program is in line with a proposal by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing to promote the DNP as the entry level for advanced nursing practice based on the increased complexity of patient care, concerns about the quality of care and patient safety, demands for a higher level of preparation for leaders who can design and assess care, shortages of doctoral-level nursing faculty and increasing educational expectations for the preparation of other health professionals. The DNP degree would prepare nurses with a blend of clinical, organizational, economic and leadership skills that would provide a positive impact on health care outcomes.

## NSU charts pre-law society



Charter members of Northwestern State's new pre-law chapter of Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity International were sworn during the Fall 2013 semester. New members are, front row from left. Brent Legendre, Shawnice Christmas, Alyssa Buker, Sarah Scott, Randall Briggs, Travis Kananack, George Broussard and William Chase James. On the back row are Byron K. Rupp, director of pre-law operations for Phi Alpha Delta; Tucker Nims, Chapter President Paxson Guest, Chapter Secretary Tschissakid Player, Chapter Secretary Katie Acosta and David Hogan. New members pledged to advance integrity, compassion and courage through service to their profession and community. Charlie Penrod (2000), professor of business at NSU, is the chapter's faculty advisor.

## Chadick honored by Mathematical Association of America



Dr. Stan Chadick, professor emeritus of mathematics at Northwestern State University, has been selected to receive the Certificate of Meritorious Service from the Mathematical Association of America.

The award is presented every five years to a prominent mathematician from each section of the association. Chadick was chosen by the Louisiana-Mississippi section.

"This is quite an honor to be bestowed on me by fellow mathematicians and I am

humbled by it," said Chadick. "I can think of so many outstanding teachers in the two states who are worthy of this honor. I feel fortunate to have had a job that I truly loved and to have worked with so many outstanding people over the years."

Chadick joined the faculty at Northwestern State in 1969 and retired as a professor of mathematics in 2005. He was named professor emeritus in 2011. Chadick was the first director of the Louisiana Scholars' College from 1986-87 and was the first curriculum coordinator for the Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts from 1983-85. He has been an invited speaker at mathematics conferences, professional organizations, schools and civic groups on topics including motivation, teaching, mathematics and humor.



- ▶ **The President's Command Performance**, a spring gala honoring Bill Brent, is set for April 4. Brent will be the inaugural inductee into the Mrs. H.D. Dear Sr. and Alice Estelle Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts Hall of Fame.
  - ▶ All band alumni, auxiliary twirling and dance groups and friends are invited back to Northwestern for the **Bill Brent Blow-Out**, a weekend celebration April 26-27. The celebration will include an alumni band rehearsal and performance, a reception honor Brent and the annual family day concert.
- Band alumni are encouraged to bring their instruments, but some will be available for check-out. The rehearsal will begin at 1 p.m. Saturday, April 26 and conclude by 5 p.m. The cost to attend the 6:30 p.m. reception is \$15 per person.
- A 2 p.m. performance, with Brent conducting will take place on Sunday.
- For more information, contact Jeff Mathews at [mathewsj@nsula.edu](mailto:mathewsj@nsula.edu). To register to attend visit [northwesternalumni.com/events](http://northwesternalumni.com/events) and scroll to the Bill Brent Blowout page.
- Read more about Brent's long career and reflections on his years at NSU in our Lagniappe section accessed at [northwesternalumni.com](http://northwesternalumni.com).

## Meziere finds pathway to teaching through PREP, now offered online

After serving as a military trainer/instructor during six of his 22 years in the U.S. Army and Louisiana National Guard, Rodney Meziere felt he could make a difference in his community by becoming a teacher.

"I enjoyed teaching soldiers. I wanted to give back to my community and teach in the area where I grew up," he said. He found a position at Cloutierville Elementary/Jr. high near his home and quickly learned that educating middle schoolers is far different from his experience as a military instructor.

"My teaching methods were mostly lecture with limited group interaction. My first year was a disaster and the scores of my students on LEAP and ILEAP were less than desirable," he said. "I knew if I intended to give the teaching profession some serious consideration, I was going to need help."

Meziere enrolled in Northwestern State University's Practitioner Teacher

Program (PREP), an alternative certification pathway for individuals who want to become certified to teach. PREP is an intensive 8-week summer program followed by internship and seminar teaching for the following fall and spring semesters in an approved school. Completion leads to a Louisiana teaching license in elementary grades 1-5, middle grades 4-8 or secondary grades 6-12.

**"NSU has a long history of producing quality teachers and, besides being close to my home, I knew that it was the right place for me to learn how to become an effective teacher."**

—Meziere

To enroll in PREP, participants must hold a degree from a regionally accredited institution. PREP completers do not earn a degree but completers can apply 12 hours of coursework towards a graduate degree in education.

After his military discharge, Meziere earned a bachelor's degree in social sciences and an associate degree in business administration at NSU in 2008 and completed a master's degree in heritage resources at NSU in 2010. During the time he was earning his graduate degree, job opportunities in his chosen field withered in the wake of federal cutbacks. He worked for several federal agencies, but "was dissatisfied with office jobs. I wanted to try something different."

The opportunity to teach at Cloutierville arose in 2012.

"After the challenging summer course, in which I learned a lot about classroom management, instructional

methods and other professional attributes such as the qualities and traits of teaching, I felt ready for my second year of teaching," Meziere said. "NSU PREP worked. I implemented what I learned in PREP and am having a very successful year. Classroom management, teaching, Kagan strategies and other techniques I learned fell into place."

Meziere was recently voted Junior High Teacher of the Year at Cloutierville Elementary/Jr. High.

"Everyone involved in the PREP program has been wonderful -- instructors, staff and everyone involved," Meziere said. "I cannot express enough how supportive the program staff has been. When a PREP student needs anything -- help, assistance, advice -- the PREP staff will help in a timely manner. Without NSU PREP, I am most certain that I would not have continued my endeavor to become a teacher."

Meziere not only recommends NSU PREP to those interested in making a career change, but also as a refresher to veteran teachers.

"Teaching changes continuously and better methods are evolving. NSU maintains current methods of pedagogy and stays abreast with these current changes," he said.

Beginning this summer PREP will be offered online for students throughout Louisiana. The deadline to apply is April 15. For more information on PREP and other alternate certificate pathways, admission requirements and scholarships, visit [dtl.nsula.edu/welcome-2](http://dtl.nsula.edu/welcome-2). To speak with an advisor, contact Ramona Wynder, Transition to Teaching Facilitator, at (318) 357-4058 or [wynderr@nsula.edu](mailto:wynderr@nsula.edu).



Rodney Meziere





*2nd Lt. Kristen Daisy with her father Malcolm Daisy*

## ROTC alum honors father for being an example of perseverance

2nd Lt. Kristen M. Daisy established a scholarship that honors her father and will benefit a cadet in Northwestern State University's ROTC program. The Malcolm Daisy ROTC Scholarship will be awarded every semester in the amount of \$500 to a cadet selected by faculty in NSU's Department of Military Science. Daisy, a native of Morgan City, graduated from Northwestern State in December 2012, and is an alumna of the Army ROTC Demon Battalion.

Daisy stipulates that the ROTC Scholarship will be awarded to a hard-working, loyal, and dedicated cadet as a reward for perseverance against adversity and drive to serve one's country in the United States Army as an officer. The inaugural recipient is Cadet Evan Richard of Baton Rouge.

"This scholarship is designed to help those in need who are trying to serve our blessed country and do not have the financial means to do so or are scraping by just to stay in college. It is a reminder that good things come to those who work hard and persevere though all obstacles in life," she said.

Daisy named the scholarship to honor her father, the rock of

her family who "is the definition of perseverance and strength." Malcolm Daisy grew up on a houseboat with parents who never finished high school. As a youngster, he overcame personal hardship to graduate from high school, but because of financial constraints, only attended one semester of college. He and Daisy's mother, Rebecca, worked so that Daisy and her sister got a good education to keep from falling into the hardships they endured as children, she said.

"My family could not afford to send me or my sister to college so I decided to apply for the Army ROTC my senior year in high school. I received the scholarship and attended NSU," Daisy said. Upon graduation, she was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army and is now stationed at Rhine Ordnance Barracks, Germany, as an Ordnance officer for Service Company, 5th Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery, under 10th Air and Missile Defense Command.

During Daisy's freshman year at NSU, her father was diagnosed with pharyngeal cancer.

"We didn't know how we would handle it. I could fight any battle. I could conquer any obstacle. I could overcome any enemy. But to battle what you cannot see terrified me. He spent months in radiation and chemotherapy. I spent months wondering how he could remain positive and strong by fighting something he couldn't see. There were months of scraping together money to pay for treatments. Sometimes I donated my refund check, other times I needed it to

survive on my own. There were days where bills went unpaid and months of waiting, hoping and praying went by until March 2009, when he was diagnosed cancer free."

Daisy said her father inspired her to finish college and establish the scholarship. Candidates for the Malcolm Daisy ROTC Scholarship must have a grade point average of 2.8 or higher, must score 180 or better with at least 60 percent in each event on the Army Physical Fitness Test and must be part of the NSU ROTC program. The students selected must also exhibit the Army values of loyalty, duty, honor, respect, selfless service, integrity, and personal courage. Applicants must also be engaged in volunteer activities and demonstrate a financial need.

**"My father believes that education is the most important thing to be successful. I believe that too," Daisy said. "I hope this scholarship becomes a beacon of hope and a motivation for those who need to be reminded that hard work, dedication, and perseverance will almost always pay off. And for those that make it to the graduation stage, I challenge you to help those who are coming behind you. Anyone can make a difference. You just have to decide to do it."**

For more information on Northwestern State's ROTC program, go to [goarmy.com/rotc/schools/northwestern-state-university-of-louisiana](http://goarmy.com/rotc/schools/northwestern-state-university-of-louisiana) or email [nsurotc@nsula.edu](mailto:nsurotc@nsula.edu).

## Student-athlete volunteers on medical mission

Despite spending the Christmas holiday away from her family in a new country, Northwestern State volleyball player Mackenzie Neely took time out of her holiday break to work with the International Medical Relief in multiple cities affected by the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

International Medical Relief is an organization that plans medical mission trips all over the world that allows nurses, medical students, EMTs, and pre-medical and pre-PA (physician's assistant) students to provide relief to countries suffering from disasters. Neely of Dripping Springs, Texas, is a senior majoring in nursing with a minor in physiology.

"Traveling to Haiti opened my eyes and truly reinforced my passion to study medicine and help people in need," said Neely. "The people of Haiti are so appreciative of all we had to offer them, and the children were full of so much laughter and love. This trip was one of the most rewarding things I have ever done, and was definitely the most amazing Christmas I have ever had. I will forever cherish those memories."

Day-to-day activities consisted of traveling to new towns and villages each day to set up a medical clinic that provided treatment to local residents. Neely spent most of her days in triage, assessing patients and taking vital signs before sending them off to the nurses and doctors for further care. She also aided in the pharmacy, filling prescriptions for patients.

Neely also brought a few supplies with her to distribute to kids on Christmas, including over 3,000 toothbrushes, ATX Mafia Christmas shirts, soccer balls, jump ropes and school

supplies.

"The people in Haiti are the most kind, caring and appreciative people I have ever met - there is no such thing as a stranger there," said Neely. "Though there are language barriers and cultural differences, there is nothing a smile and a hug can't convey. Love is universal. Sickness and starvation are prevalent, and kids die everyday from malnutrition."

"Wild hogs, goats, and chickens roaming the streets and eating trash is a normal every day occurrence. Tent cities are common since the earthquake left the country in ruins. Families big enough to be their own sports team live in one- and two-bedroom homes made of rock and tin and no running water, if they are lucky. Yet through all of this, Haiti is the most beautiful place I have ever seen," Neely said.

Neely will return to Haiti in early June to serve with the same organization and lend a small hand in the rebuilding process. To view pictures and read more about Neely's journey, visit her blog at the link below.

<http://myheartsinhaiti.weebly.com/>

<http://www.nsudemons.com/galleries/?gallery=268>



## Demons' 2006 tournament win keeps on giving

Every time March Madness rolls around, Iowa basketball fans cringe while Northwestern State supporters cheer. Thanks to a new Buffalo Wild Wings television commercial, they're getting a head start for the 2014 NCAA Tournament.

The Demons' memorable March 17, 2006, NCAA Tournament last-second 64-63 upset of 15th-ranked Iowa is the catalyst in a new 30-second Buffalo Wild Wings commercial which is airing nationally.

In the commercial, the game's dramatic final seconds, when NSU guard Jermaine Wallace sinks a game-winning 3-pointer just before the final buzzer, are shown on a big screen as tournament fans watch and react at a Buffalo Wild Wings restaurant.

The debut of the commercial has set off a good-natured firestorm among chagrined Hawkeye fans. One Iowa fan website, BlackHeartGoldPants.com, posted

the YouTube.com video of the commercial with a warning to viewers: "the following video and still footage may contain images of a very graphic and unsettling manner. Proceed at your own caution."

Buffalo Wild Wings is an NCAA corporate partner. Company representatives last month contacted NSU, Iowa and some members of both teams to gain permission to use the footage in the commercial, which can be seen on YouTube by using the search engine for "Buffalo Wild Wings-Heat."

"It's a great memory for our program, for our university, for our fans, and it truly is one of the special moments in the NCAA Tournament through the years," said Coach Mike McConathy. In fact, fans voted the NSU win over Iowa as the best game in more than 40 years of tournament history in a 2011 poll on the NCAA Sports.com



website. It was even used in a scene of the CBS Television daily soap opera "The Young and the Restless" that year.

The Demons made it back to the NCAA Tournament last year in a 23-9 season. They're hoping to make another run March 12-16 and capture the Southland Conference Tournament crown to clinch their fourth NCAA appearance since 2001 under McConathy, the winningest college basketball coach in state history.



# Looking Back

Louisiana's oldest city is in the midst of a 300th birthday celebration with events planned throughout 2014 to commemorate the history, culture, people and cuisine of Natchitoches.

Since its inception, Northwestern State has enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with the city of Natchitoches, culturally, economically and socially. The university enriches the community through athletics, the arts, cultural resources and learning opportunities, which the city and its residents support with their presence and their contributions.

The Northwestern State family is proud and honored to be part of such a unique, historic and vibrant community.

Happy 300th birthday, Natchitoches.

For information on activities and events, visit [natchitoches300.com](http://natchitoches300.com) or the [Natchitoches Tri-centennial Celebration](#) page on Facebook.



## Guess Who



*Answers to the Winter Guess Who, the KNWD manager and disc jockey from 1986-87, were Lynn Estes and Michael Kay.*

***This edition's Guess Who features the sophomore class officers from 1970-71. Can you name them?***





# In Memory

1939 – Dr. Violet Davion Shaver, Nov. 2013, Lake Charles  
1941 – Alton Lloyd Townsend, Jan. 28, 2014, Natchitoches  
1944 – Marjorie C. Bailey, Nov. 10, 2013, The Woodlands, Texas  
1944 – Melba Law Steeg, Dec. 24, 2013, New Orleans  
1946, 2002 – John Curtis Guillet, Jan. 23, 2014, Natchitoches  
1947 – Ruth Sanchez Eccleston, Feb. 5, 2014, Richmond, Va.  
1948 – Marjorie Dean Murdock, Feb. 15, 2014, Deweyville, Texas  
1950 – J.R. “Snap” Oakes, Jan. 9, 2014, Homer  
1952 – Firal Ryder, Jan. 10, 2014, Natchitoches  
1954 – Donald Finley, Nov. 22, 2013, Tarpon Springs, Fla.  
1954 – Harvey Gerald Cook, Feb. 2, 2014, Brenham, Texas  
1954 – Wesley Jackson, Dec. 28, 2013, Metairie  
1956 – Paula Elaine Haynes West, Jan. 19, 2014, Natchitoches  
1957 – Jerry Lavespere, Jan. 21, 2014, Pineville  
1958 – Joe L. Green, Nov. 3, 2013, Harrisonburg  
1960 – Joseph Louis Cassiere, July 17, 2013, Shreveport  
1960 – Hillman “Eddie” Hunter, June 13, 2013, Tulsa, Okla.  
1965 – Dr. Nancilee Y. Bodine, Aug. 27, 2013, Long Beach, Miss.  
1969 – Charles Ray Knighten, Oct. 11, 2013, Ville Platte  
1973 – William Michael Black, Feb. 8, 2014, Natchitoches  
1976 – David Beckermeyer, July 25, 2013, Shreveport  
1980 – Thomas Edward Palmer, Jan. 3, 2014, Natchitoches  
1985 – William A. Taylor, Dec. 4, 2013, Natchitoches  
2000 – Matt Casstevens, Jan. 5, 2014, Garland, Texas  
Andrew Gasperecz, Dec. 27, 2013, Baton Rouge  
Kimberly R. Knight, Dec. 30, 2013, Pineville  
Dr. Paralee Norman, Dec. 26, 2013, Alexandria  
Dr. Douglas Peterson, Feb. 15, 2014, Bossier City



# NSU Alumni After Hours Tour

COME JOIN US!

March 27	Shreveport	Savoie's Catering Place	6 p.m.
March 29	Dallas	Top Golf Dallas	Noon
April 5	Natchitoches	Jazzfest	6 p.m.
April 12	Houston	Ragin' Cajun	Noon
May 1	Alexandria	Tunk's	6 p.m.
June 14	Washington D.C.	Crawfish Boil	Noon



DEMONS



Registration & detailed information available at [northwesternalumni.com](http://northwesternalumni.com)



# Alumni News

## As the inaugural inductee into the CAPA Hall of Fame, Bill Brent reflects on the highs and lows of his long career at NSU

Northwestern State University will honor Bill Brent as the inaugural inductee in the Mrs. H.D. Dear Sr. and Alice E. Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts Hall of Fame in recognition of his service to the School and the University. Brent's induction will take place in conjunction with the President's Command Performance, a spring gala that will celebrate the talents of students in the creative and performing arts. The event will take place Friday, April 4.

The distinction of being named the inaugural member of the CAPA Hall of Fame is one of many accomplishments in Brent's long career as a music educator and mentor to thousands of Northwestern State students and colleagues.

Brent served at NSU for 30 years as director of bands and director of CAPA before his retirement last year. During that time, he built one of the best marching band programs in the nation. He also served as conductor of the NSU Wind Symphony.

"When I first arrived there were 48 students at my first band rehearsal but there were these incredible new facilities and NSU just seemed, even then, to be such a special place with great opportunities," Brent said. "I was just crazy and young enough just to start recruiting. I remember one January within my first couple of years, while still on semester break, I took a University vehicle and drove to high schools as far south as Houma and New Orleans and as far north as Monroe and over to Shreveport in five days recruiting and visiting schools. Most other college band directors were still on vacation. I was working. I basically lived out of the car."

Brent's recruiting efforts paid off and he still utilizes many connections and former students who teach music across the country, in addition to visiting schools.

"My vision was just to grow the band in size and quality. I had a great support from everyone, so I can't take all the credit. That same support lasted through three presidents, numerous vice presidents and alumni directors. I have always felt the University has done all that it could, considering the restraints on the budget in almost every year I've been here, to support both the band and the School of CAPA."

Brent said he always tried to be a model to his students and use the band program as one they could imitate to have successful band programs once they began their careers.

"That is exactly what Vincent R. DiNino gave me at the University of Texas. He was the director of the Longhorn Band when I was an undergraduate student as well as the assistant director James Hejl. I also have many great friends who are successful music educators and I have tried to model their programs as well over the years, especially Ms. Paula Crider, director emeritus of the Longhorn Band. She is now retired but continues to give clinics and conduct honor bands all over the world. She is a really special friend and we have had her on campus many times during the past 30 years."

Brent's fascination with music began early. He started playing the piano at age six and trombone in fifth grade at age 10. He was a section leader in the Bonham, Texas, High School Warrior Band and graduated in 1969. He said he knew from his early days in high school that he wanted to major in music and decided on music education during his senior year. He earned a bachelor of music education at the University of Texas at Austin in 1974 and a master of music in conducting in 1981.

Brent's first band director jobs were in the Austin, Texas, Independent School District at Pearce Middle School

and McCallum High School, where the marching band twice placed in the top 5 in the AAAAA state marching contest. The concert band was named in the top 10 one of those years. After earning his master's degree, he joined the staff at Nicholls State.

"Northwestern was looking for a band director but I did not apply for the job as I had just arrived at Nicholls. Richard Jennings called me about potential interest. He heard about me from J. Robert Smith who was the NSU symphony conductor. I had known Dr. Smith since my undergraduate days at UT because he was pursuing a doctoral degree in the band program and I was an undergraduate student."

Brent was so impressed with Northwestern, Natchitoches and the people he met, he accepted the job when offered by the school and Dr. Tom Paul Southerland, who was vice president of Academic Affairs at that time.

"There have been so many outstanding performances by the thousands of band students I've had the pleasure to work with over the years. I'll always remember the band performances at the old State Fair game. Our fans were so excited. And there was the year at the Stephen F. Austin game in Nacogdoches that a huge rainstorm erupted just as the band began the performance. It rained so hard and the wind was so strong, you could only hear the band on the field. The film of the performance was just a sea of rain coming down on the field but our kids and fans were so excited and we won the Southland Conference Football Championship that year at that game."

But along with the highs came the lows. In 1986, Northwestern State declared financial exigency and the university's future was uncertain.

"After the initial shock, I saw it as an opportunity to rebuild the university and make truly exciting things happen...and that is what did happen,"

## PNCB website features profile of Navy Reserve nurse



Cook

A Northwestern State University nursing graduate was featured on the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board website in a profile that offers insight into her career as a Navy Reserves pediatric care nurse practitioner. Ingrid Cook of Baton Rouge provides care for children of U.S. military families as well as children of civilian families in her community and discussed the challenges and rewards of her profession as well as advice for students.

The Pediatric Nursing Certification Board is the largest independent pediatric nursing certification organization in the United States. Over 95 percent of all pediatric nurses who certify

choose PNCB. Cook's profile on the site is one of several that give prospective nursing professionals a detailed look at what they do and how they impact patient care, according to Lori Anne Boocks, director of marketing and communications for PNCB.

The pediatric nursing careers webpage receives requests from students in elementary through undergraduate nursing school who would like to interview a pediatric nursing professional. Because the page is so popular, PNCB added a section with interviews of nursing professionals in various roles to illustrate the many possibilities in the pediatric nursing field. Cook described a typical day on the job, her favorite aspects of nursing and the education needed to achieve her role as a military pediatric nursing professional.

Cook earned her Master of Science in Nursing through the pediatric nurse practitioner program at Northwestern State in 2010. Before graduation, she earned the 2009 Graduate Student of the Year award presented by Northwestern State's Beta Chi Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing. Last October, the Department of the Navy, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, appointed her

to serve a three-year term as the Navy Nurse Corps Reserves Specialty Leader for Pediatric Nursing.

"As the Reserve Pediatric/PNP Specialty Leader, I serve as the pediatric subject matter expert concerning national specialty nursing issues, serve as the senior mentor to assist members with their career development needs, works closely with U.S. Navy recruiters to review and provide recommendations for pediatric nurses who have applied to join the US Navy Nurse Corps," Cook said.

Cook was recently nominated for a REAL Award for her dedication to improving the health of low-income families. She rides a mobile health clinic bus to visit children in some of Baton Rouge's most poverty-stricken neighborhoods in the Big Blue Bus initiative sponsored by Our Lady of the Lake Hospital. REAL Awards were created to celebrate the work of health-care workers for saving lives around the world.

Read Cook's profile on the PNCB website at [pncb.org/ptistore/control/interviews/nr](http://pncb.org/ptistore/control/interviews/nr). For information on nursing programs available at Northwestern State, visit [nursing.nsula.edu/nursing](http://nursing.nsula.edu/nursing).

*Bill Brent continued from page 6*

he said. "I can't say enough about the positive attitude and hard work of the faculty at NSU and especially in CAPA during the past five years."

Still, there have been other recent highlights. In 2011, the band was a finalist for the Sudler Trophy, an award that recognizes collegiate marching bands of particular excellence that have made outstanding contributions to the American way of life. In 2008, the Spirit of Northwestern Demon Marching Band was named one of the top eight in the country by the website collegeotr.com. That year, Brent received the Outstanding Bandmaster Award for Louisiana from the Epsilon Chapter of Phi Beta Mu International Bandmasters Fraternity. In 2007, he was inducted into the Louisiana Music Educators Association Hall of Fame. Brent received the President's Distinguished Award in recognition of his work at NSU in 2002. In 2011, he was named an honorary alumnus of Northwestern State and the NSU Band Hall was formally named for him.

Now that the baton has been formally passed to Dr. Greg Handel as CAPA director and Dr. Jeff Mathews as director of bands, Brent will remain on staff as director of operations

and special projects for the School. He is engaged in recruiting for the university and CAPA and will assist with student teacher observations and fund raising for the NSU Foundation.

"I am most grateful for the support of both [NSU Presidents] Dr. Robert Alost and Dr. Randy Webb. CAPA would not be what it is today without their support and especially the past few years with all of the budget cuts. Dr. Webb and Brenda have been a rock during this period."

The President's Command Performance will begin at 6 p.m. with a cocktail reception and silent auction in the Alumni Plaza and Orville Hanchey Gallery, followed by a concluding musical performance in Magale Recital Hall. Presale tickets are \$65 per person or \$125 per couple with reserved tables of eight available. Sponsorships are available at the patron and corporate levels. All proceeds will benefit the Northwestern State University Foundation.

To purchase tickets or sponsorships, contact Vanner Erikson, assistant director of Alumni Affairs, at (318) 357-4414. Information is also available at [northwesternalumni.com](http://northwesternalumni.com).



# New online program prepares students for growing opportunities in Public Safety Administration

By Catherine Heitman

**P**reparation. Gifford Saravia will tell you it's essential to saving lives as a paramedic, but it's also key to success in life.

"Fate always favors the prepared medic," said Saravia, who uses his experience as a paramedic in the Superdome after Hurricane Katrina as an example. "That holds true in any undertaking, where, if you're prepared, regardless of what's thrown at you, you can handle it. You're gonna do well."

It's why he's continued to pursue his education beyond his associate degree and to encourage young paramedics to do the same.

Recently, Saravia, education manager at the National EMS Academy in Lafayette, and some of his coworkers earned bachelor's degrees in Unified Public Safety Administration online through Northwestern State University.

This summer, the university launched a similar bachelor's program, designed for older students with some college credit. The online program even allows students to get credit for work experience. It's part of a bachelor's program in Organizational Leadership, with a specialty in Public Safety Administration.

The goal of the program is to prepare students for administrative roles in fire and emergency medical service, law enforcement, emergency management and related public safety careers. It's one of nine concentrations at each of the University of Louisiana System universities, ranging in interests as diverse as Foodservice Strategies and Operations and Cultural and Arts Institutions.

Saravia had much in common with the students targeted for this new program. He, too, was a "nontraditional student." With a family and full workload as an instructor at the EMS academy (the education division of Acadian Ambulance Service) and chief investigator for the Iberia Parish Coroner's Office, there already weren't enough hours in the day. Yet he was determined.

"For me, it started out as a bucket list item. There was no real incentive (at the EMS Academy) for me to get a bachelor's. I was okay with the associate degree, as far as my role at the time. But I was like, you know what, I'm going to do this," he said.

His older sister had recently earned her bachelor's degree. "She had a lifelong dream of becoming an elementary school teacher, and two years ago, at the age of 53, she graduated. So she gave me some motivation to get that done," Saravia said.

"One of my cohorts here is a list, bullet-point kinda guy," he said, with a laugh. "So he took out the spread sheet and plotted out our courses that we needed to take and

when they were offered. So we all took them together. We all supported each other.

"Two full-time jobs and college courses. We started out slow, 'let's do one course.' Then we saw that one was relatively easy, 'let's do two.' And so the norm became, 'let's do three.' In the end, we would do nine hours a semester."

Saravia, who now instructs EMS supervisors, said he has no doubt that the added education has improved his job performance and opportunities. Now, he's pursuing a master's degree, and Northwestern State is already encouraging him to get a doctorate.

Since he teaches adults, his master's degree will focus on adult education, with a concentration in homeland security. He plans to retire from full-time employment in about 10 years and to teach online courses as a retirement supplement.

"You do enough online courses, you know what works and what doesn't," Saravia said. "I know I could put on some really good stuff, with the experiences I've had."

Going back to school and taking online courses is challenging, he said. Students, particularly those with family and work obligations, need to be prepared to devote time on nights and weekends to school.

"You really have to be disciplined and pace yourself. You have to plan well and stay focused," he said.

One of his degree projects resulted in a crisis plan that has been adopted by the Louisi-

**"By getting an advanced education or just by getting your associate or your bachelor's, all this stuff prepares you -- with your communication skills, your background of information to draw from -- it introduces you to different ideas and concepts, even to cultural differences, a whole host of things."**



Saravia

continued on page 22

# CRUISE



**The Northwestern State University Alumni Association is offering an opportunity for travelers to experience exotic, historic and breathtaking destinations while contributing financial support to the Association. Two luxury cruises are planned for 2014 to western Europe and northern Europe.**

"These cruises are a great opportunity for our alumni to network with other Northwestern State alumni and Louisiana natives," said Haley Blount, associate director of Alumni Affairs. "The trips are offered to our alumni and friends at discounted rates because of the partnership we share with other Louisiana universities and the travel companies. It's also the perfect way to be able to give back to the university, because the NSU Alumni Association gets a portion of the proceeds from each booking."

**A European Tapestry cruise** with ports of call in Portugal, Spain and France is scheduled from June 23-July 1. Travellers will visit ancient and modern wonders in Oporto, La Coruña and Bilbao, and explore the splendor of Bordeaux, the legendary wine country of France.

**A Baltic Marvels cruise** will set sail from Copenhagen to Stockholm with stops in Germany, Estonia, Russia and Finland. This cruise sails Aug. 13-21.

For more information, visit [northwesternalumni.com/travel](http://northwesternalumni.com/travel) or call Blount at (318) 357-4414.

*Public Safety Administration program continued from page 21*

ana Department of Health and Hospitals region 4 coroners' offices, though Saravia hopes it will never have to be implemented. He and a fellow student developed an intermediate mass fatality plan for coroners in the Department of Health and Hospitals Region that comprises the parishes of Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary and Vermilion.

"You want to have plans like this on the shelf. When stuff is flying around you is not the time to figure those things out," Saravia said about the plan he and his colleague developed.

The increased emphasis on homeland security and preparation for emergencies has created more opportunities for individuals with degrees in Public Safety Administration, he explained.

"So, where agencies weren't apt to spend money on things that may happen, now the focus is preventing things from happening and also mitigating their effects if they should happen," he said.

Northwestern State's Public Safety Administration program coordinator Jack Atherton agreed that there are more job opportunities in the public safety field, but especially for more highly educated and experienced applicants.

The new online Bachelor of Arts degree in organizational leadership with a concentration in public safety administration is designed to meet the demand for public safety professionals in an increasingly dangerous and evolving field that addresses cybercrimes and threats to homeland security at the local, state and federal levels.

"The current Occupational Outlook Handbook clearly demonstrates the need for, not only more UPSA professionals, but also for better-prepared applicants," Atherton said. "Gifford is a perfect example of the kind of student we hope to attract, students who have been working in the field and want to further their education or gain new knowledge and experience."

Program completers possess specialized skills and contemporary perspectives on the scientific, social and informational concentrations involved in intelligence gathering, policing, fire services and emergency management, proactive planning, security services and other public safety arenas.

Saravia recommends Northwestern State's program, its

faculty and staff to his students and coworkers. "They go out of their way to help you. I really have nothing but positive things to say about my experience at NSU," he said. He said the program attracts professionals from Louisiana and surrounding states. He has encountered students from other states in his classes.

He said he encourages his students to get as much education as they can.

**"If two people apply for a job, all things being equal, the one with a degree is going to get it. I try to encourage them to go toward an educational path, to take the plunge now," he said. "I tell them, 'you don't think you need it now. Trust me. When it comes down to it, you're going to be glad you did.'"**

## ONE DEGREE | NINE UNIVERSITIES

The University of Louisiana System's Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Leadership degree is designed for working adults who have already earned **at least 60 hours** of college credit and want to finish a bachelor's degree. Students who enroll in the organizational leadership degree can choose from nine distinctive concentrations that enhance their career goals.

The degree consists of 30 hours of courses offered jointly by faculty at the nine universities and 30 hours of concentration and elective courses offered by each institution. The online platform is seamless and the cost is uniform across concentrations and universities.

To enter the program, students must be at least **25 years old** and have completed **60 hours of college credit** including general education courses. However, students with less than 60 hours will have opportunities to earn credit online and through prior learning assessments.

Offered in five, eight-week terms each year, and charging a flat per credit hour rate of \$325, the program can be completed in two years well below the cost of other online degree programs.

For more information, visit [www.ulsystem.edu/ONEdegreeNINEuniversities](http://www.ulsystem.edu/ONEdegreeNINEuniversities).



# Campus News



Members of the Gallaspy family presented a distribution of over \$2.6 million from the estate of the late Mary Rives Gallaspy to support scholarships at Northwestern State University. Gallaspy, a 1946 graduate of Northwestern State, was a DeSoto Parish educator, businesswoman and philanthropist known for her generosity and dedication to her church and community. Northwestern State's Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development is named for her and several members of her family that attended Northwestern. The Gallaspy family has also initiated several scholarships to benefit students in business, education, mathematics, family and consumer sciences. From left are Dr. Whit Gallaspy, John Gallaspy, NSU President Dr. Randall J. Webb, NSU Foundation President Lola Dunahoe, Dr. Chris Maggio, assistant vice president for External Affairs, and Vice President for External Affairs Jerry Pierce. The family has made a presentation annually for the last three years.

## CP-Tel supports scholarships for students in its service area

Logan Kyzar of Natchitoches is the recipient of this year's CP-Tel Endowed Scholarship awarded through the Northwestern State University Foundation. Kyzar is a junior from Natchitoches majoring in criminal justice.

CP-Tel established the scholarship a decade ago with preference to graduates from Lakeview, Pleasant Hill, Mansfield, St. Mary's, Natchitoches Central, Many and Central Grand Cane high schools whose parents, grandparents or legal guardians are CP-Tel customers or work for a business that is a CP-Tel customer. Eligible students must graduate with a high school cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or

higher and must maintain a 2.5 cumulative GPA throughout college. The scholarship is awarded to a freshman for a four-year duration. Over the years, the company made annual contributions to the scholarship, which has grown enough for the award amount to be increased.

Kyzar hopes to pursue a career in homicide investigation or criminal forensic investigation. He is employed at CP-Tel as an outside plant technician. CP-TEL CEO Mike Fox said giving back to local communities is important to the company.

"I'm a firm believer in supporting education and programs in our service area. One of my goals is to become even more involved with community outreach," Fox said. "A healthy university makes a healthy city, which brings in other businesses and customers for us."

Dr. Chris Maggio, director of University of Advancement, said endowed scholarships benefit students because they grow over time.

"Many businesses and individuals establish and regularly contribute to scholarships with long-term goals in mind," Maggio said. "This is a win-win for the student and the donor."

CP-Tel also recently established a scholarship to benefit a student majoring in engineering technology. The scholarship will be awarded to an ET student in the amount of \$1,000 for one year.

CP-Tel is a local telecommunications company headquartered in Natchitoches and currently serves Natchitoches, Sabine and DeSoto parishes. The company is active in supporting local communities and provides support for athletic, music and scholastic programs in local schools.



CP-Tel CEO Mike Fox presented the CP-Tel Endowed Scholarship to Logan Kyzar of Natchitoches. The four-year scholarship is awarded to a student from Natchitoches, Sabine or DeSoto parish. From left are Assistant Director for University Advancement Van Erikson, Kyzar, Fox and Dr. Chris Maggio, director of University Advancement.

## Marching contest garners wide exposure, earns support of Band House owner

**B**ill Causey of the Band House music store in Shreveport presented a check for \$4,000 to Dr. Jeff Mathews, director of bands at Northwestern State University, to support the annual Northwestern State University High School Band Marching Contest. Causey said the annual event gives contestants a good performance experience with qualified judges and helps promote music education in schools.

**“I support the marching contest because I want to give kids the opportunity for that experience, get them to visit a college campus and hear a good college band,” Causey said.**

Northwestern State hosted the 2013 contest Oct. 26 in Turpin Stadium, drawing bands from schools of all sizes from throughout Louisiana and Texas. The contest was streamed online via [banddirector.com](http://banddirector.com) with color commentators in the press box who provided information about the bands and their history. This year, 21 bands participated averaging 75-100 members each with total attendance of about 4,000, including spectators, Mathews said. The event includes an exhibition performance by Northwestern State's Spirit of Northwestern Demon Marching Band, a 300-plus member ensemble that performs at athletic events, parades and university functions.

Causey's history with the contest goes back to when it was first established by Bill Brent in the 1980s and Causey was a band director who brought his band to the contest. Brent was director of bands and director of the NSU's School of Creative and Performing Arts before announcing his retirement this year.

“I came every year,” Causey said, lauding the work of Brent as an exceptional director, colleague and mentor. During the years Causey participated in the marching contest, he observed “good, nationally-known judges with objective evaluations that gave us an idea of where we stood. It was always a good experience for the kids and good for them to see the NSU band.”

Causey described his young grandson's reaction while attending this year's contest.

“When NSU band played the first note, he said ‘Wow!’ That's what this is all about, having these kids get turned on to music. That sealed it and I knew I was going to make this presentation. If this is what this contest does for one kid, think what it has done for other students and other band



*Bill Causey of Band House music store in Shreveport, center, presented a check for \$4,000 to support the annual Northwestern State University High School Band Marching Contest. A former band director, Causey said the event is a valuable experience for high school students and promotes music education in schools. Dr. Chris Maggio, director of the NSU Foundation, and Dr. Jeff Mathews, director of bands, thanked Causey for his generosity during a Wind Ensemble concert.*

directors who participated. Northwestern is promoting music education and is known for the number of excellent teachers they produce who are doing a great job all over Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas. The marching contest gives kids the opportunity to know what a good band is and it's easy to support that.”

Causey, who grew up in Natchitoches, said his parents, his sons and daughter-in-law all attended Northwestern State, but his motivation in supporting the marching contest has more to do with his esteem for Mathews and Brent, who have supported him professionally and are known to have positively impacted many students over the years.

**“They support the kids from start to finish,” he said. “I want to see other kids have that opportunity and to keep something that is good going.”**

The Band House has served the Ark-La-Tex with two locations for over 12 years, providing musicians, bands and music programs with musical products. Company staff have over 100 years of combined teaching and professional experience.

The 2014 Northwestern State Marching Contest is tentatively scheduled for Nov. 8. For more information on results, ratings, classification, judges and more, visit [demonband.nsula.edu/marching-contest](http://demonband.nsula.edu/marching-contest). For information on the Spirit of Northwestern Demon Marching Band, visit [demonband.nsula.edu](http://demonband.nsula.edu).





*Justin Benefield and Cooper*

## Earning a diploma at NSU was part of recent grad's family tradition

**No one had to tell Justin Benefield about the advantages of attending Northwestern State University. All he had to do was look around at any family gathering.**

Benefield is the third generation of his family to earn a degree from Northwestern State receiving a Bachelor of General Studies at Friday's fall commencement. He was among 822 graduates at Friday's ceremonies.

Benefield's grandparents, Billy Benefield Sr. and Dorothy Benefield graduated from Northwestern State in the 1950's. His parents Billy Benefield Jr. and Carolyn Benefield, along with an aunt Julie Benefield Johnson, earned degrees in the 1980's. A great aunt, Lucille T. Carnahan, graduated from Louisiana State Normal School (now Northwestern State) in 1928 and was a longtime faculty member. In all, 17 members of the family are Northwestern State graduates.

"I knew I would come here. My parents and grandparents did. I received a good education here," said Justin Benefield. "I think it will finally

hit me later today. It is great to have the diploma."

Along with receiving a quality education, Benefield took advantage of opportunities to develop other skills through campus extracurricular activities. Benefield was a member of Kappa Alpha Fraternity, serving as the chapter's president in 2012. Benefield was also a member of Demon Volunteers in Progress for two years.

"I learned some lifelong lessons being in KA such as how to run a business, how to manage my time and what it takes to be a leader," said Benefield. "As president, you have to be over 40 young men, make sure all the bills are paid and that deadlines are met. The job requires you to work with the national office and teaches you to do things that may be difficult because it is best for the organization."

Demon Volunteers in Progress assist the university's Freshman Connection program, which serves as a campus orientation program for incoming freshmen.

"We worked behind the scenes to help Freshman Connection go smoothly," said Benefield. "We helped set up activities, relayed instructions and did whatever is necessary. Freshman Connection is a great way for incoming students to learn their way around campus and I met several incoming students who later became fraternity brothers."

Benefield has worked for Natchitoches businessman Johnny Antoon for two and a half years, one of countless NSU students who worked their way through college under Antoon's guidance. Many of Antoon's former employees have gone on to successful careers in a variety of fields.

"Working for Mr. Johnny has been a wonderful experience," said Benefield. "He treats everyone who works for him so well that I am willing to do whatever is needed plus more to help him out. A lot of people have worked for him over the past 40 years and I am glad to have been able to be part of that group."



# Students utilizing MyEdu to network for jobs, internships

**Brittany McConathy** is not waiting until graduation to start her job search. The Northwestern State University junior business administration major from Pineville is utilizing MyEdu to look for employment. MyEdu is a social network that helps students succeed in college, pursue internships and find jobs by creating a profile that lists the courses they have taken, work and volunteer experiences and other qualifications that prospective employers can view.

"I am building my profile now so that when I do get close to graduation I am not scrambling for a job," McConathy said. "I would advise any college student to use this wonderful program because it's free to sign up and employers are always surfing MyEdu looking for prospective employees. This is such a helpful and user friendly site."

Dr. Margaret Kilcoyne, director of Northwestern State's School of Business, made her students aware of MyEdu after Dr. Sandra Woodley, president of the University of Louisiana System, described how Texas universities are using the network. Woodley forged a partnership with MyEdu with the intention of matching students with prospective employers.

"The University of Louisiana System is doubling its efforts to help students succeed in college and connect with employers. As a system, we have always worked diligently to provide access to a high quality education for the 90,000

students we serve, but we also want our students to finish their degrees quickly with a seamless transition to the workforce. That is why we are so excited about our partnership with the cutting-edge technology company MyEdu that provides the online platform to fuel this important new initiative," said Woodley.

"Since a section of my business communication course deals with employment -- how to search for jobs, how to write a resume and how to apply for jobs -- all my students were required to create an account," Kilcoyne said. "Some of the students used the site when they were told to find a job that they could apply for upon graduating with a business degree and write a cover letter and create a resume to match the job description. Based on student feedback it is an awesome tool."

Students can search for internships and future jobs, post career-related information and documents to be used by employers, Kilcoyne said. The platform creators are also willing to come to Northwestern State to demonstrate the site for students and faculty.

"I personally love MyEdu. I have used it various time to search for jobs and internships around my hometown," said Lacy Seals, a junior from Kenner. "I became aware of it through my BUAD 2200 class with Dr. Kilcoyne. I originally signed up for it because Dr. Kilcoyne asked for it. However, after I played around on the website I really loved it. It makes finding a job easy and fun. I also

like being able to customize my profile, which gives other people a chance to see me and know a little about me. I have recommended it to some friends at other school as well."

Kathleen Sylvester, a senior accounting major from Natchitoches, also signed up with Kilcoyne's encouragement.

"It has been beneficial in my assignments of having to find a job listing and helping me look for an internship this summer," Sylvester said. "It has definitely helped me with my coursework and for that I am thankful."

MyEdu collects data from student users around the country on courses and degree programs that allows students to customize their academic path to align with the job market in their field. The site allows employers to connect with students, communicate what their company has to offer, target job postings and browse student profiles. The company's website says its network engages more than 1 million students, more than 800 schools and companies as recognizable as Macy's, ADP and Waste Management.

"It is a way to showcase students' knowledge and skill sets to potential employers. This network would apply to all majors seeking jobs. The bottom line is every student will be seeking employment and this is an awesome network to use," Kilcoyne said.

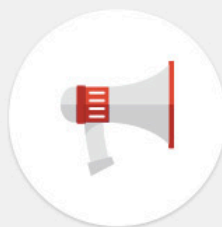
For more information, visit [myedu.com](http://myedu.com).

## THE PERKS

### MyEdu helps students



Succeed In College



Tell Their Stories



Get Jobs & Internships